

# MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES FOR SENIORS: WEEK 6

## Plan for protein

**Protein is an important nutrient because it helps the body build bones, muscles, cartilage, skin and blood.**

Protein can be found in foods such as beef, pork, chicken, turkey and seafood. These foods can provide a range of nutrients your body needs such as iron, B vitamins, magnesium, zinc and unsaturated fat. There are also many plant-based sources of protein, such as beans, nuts and seeds.

### Lean choices

Lean choices have a low amount of fat. There are lean varieties of most types of meat, poultry and seafood. This can include leaner cuts of beef or pork, chicken breast (instead of thighs) and less fatty fish such as perch. Some types of meat are also naturally leaner than others. Venison, for example, has less fat than beef.

**Choosing ground meat:** Even though turkey is a leaner meat than beef, when buying ground meat varieties, make sure to read the food label because these options come in varying fat percentages. For example, 90% lean ground beef has less fat than 85% lean ground turkey.

**Processed meats:** Unlike lean cuts, processed meats such as hot dogs, bacon, sausage and deli meats such as salami, bologna, ham and turkey are highly processed. Processed meats are those that are preserved by smoking, curing or salting, or by adding chemical preservatives. These meats have been linked to an increased risk for cancer. Since they often contain high amounts of fat and sodium, choose processed meats less.

The recommendations for this food group are in ounce-equivalents. Think of an ounce-equivalent as one serving. Serving sizes are not the same for all types of foods because different foods contain different amounts of nutrients. (For more information on what equals an ounce-equivalent, visit [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov).) For example, one ounce of cooked chicken breast counts as one serving but one egg (or three egg whites) also counts as one serving. Meeting a daily recommendation of five servings could look like this:

1 scrambled egg, ½ can of tuna, 1 small lean hamburger patty (2 ounces in weight)  
OR 2 slices of deli turkey, 1 small chicken breast half (3 ounces in weight)



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### Did you know?

Lean cuts of beef include round steaks, top loin, top sirloin, chuck shoulder and arm roast. Pork loin, tenderloin, center loin and ham are some of the leaner cuts of pork. When in doubt, check the food label or ask your butcher.



## WEEKLY RECIPE

Remember to wash your hands and prepare food safely.

### Quick Chili (serves 4)

1. Cook **½ pound ground meat** (look for 90% fat free) over medium-high heat until it has reached an internal temperature of 160 °F. Make sure to use a food thermometer that has been calibrated.
2. Look for “no-salt-added” for all canned options. Do not drain the canned products. To the ground meat, add **one 15-ounce can of kidney beans, one 15-ounce can of crushed tomatoes, one 8-ounce can of sliced carrots, 1 tablespoon diced onions, 1½ tablespoons of chili powder and 1 tablespoon of cumin**. Bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat, cover and let simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Store leftovers in the refrigerator, or freeze for future use.

Recipe adapted from University of Minnesota, Cooperative Extension Service, Simply Good Eating Recipe Cards, Vol. 2, 2007. USDA Mixing Bowl, Quick Chili, <https://www.whatscookingfns.usda.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/quick-chili>

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